

RECREATION

1997

The Klamath Falls BLM conducted several different recreation monitoring efforts throughout 1997. Through monitoring, the BLM is continuing to gain valuable information about the types and levels of recreation use occurring on the wetland property. As the recreation use pattern picture becomes clearer, the efforts in providing adequate and proper facility development become better defined.

Informal monitoring and observations of recreation visitors occurred on a fairly regular basis throughout the year by BLM employees visiting the wetland property. Additional monitoring occurs through the use of (and comments from) voluntary self-registration forms and more formal, personal contacts with visitors. Based on these informal observations and other monitoring, some general conclusions from the 1997 recreation use season can be made: 1) There was similar use of the wetland during the 1997 waterfowl hunting season versus the 1996 hunting season. The opportunities for finding waterfowl were limited, as the former pasture lands within the wetland property were drained and virtually devoid of standing water. 2) Use of the property by non-hunters (fishermen, sightseers, wildlife viewers, hikers, etc.) continues to greatly exceed use by hunters. 3) Use of the area during the non-hunting season was similar to 1996, but overall year-round use remains light (estimated to average 5 visitors per day). 4) Average group size remains small, probably less than three individuals per group.

Regarding additional facilities, the BLM currently provides garbage cans for the public's use. A portable toilet was provided during the hunting season. The facilities seems to receive good use and acceptance by the visitors, as litter and other messes were reduced. The BLM is planning to provide a permanent restroom, interpretive displays, a wetland boardwalk trail, and other day-use facilities in 1998. In addition, the access road and parking area will be paved to reduce complaints from nearby landowners regarding dusty road conditions.

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Informal monitoring and observations of recreation visitors occurred on a fairly regular basis throughout the year by BLM employees visiting the wetland property. Additional monitoring occurs through the use of (and comments from) voluntary self-registration forms and more formal, personal contacts with visitors. Based on these informal observations and other monitoring, some general conclusions from the 1998 recreation use season can be made: 1) There was increased use of the wetland during the 1998 waterfowl hunting season versus the 1997 hunting season. The opportunities for finding waterfowl and hunting success were much greater, as the former pasture lands within the wetland property provided good cover and open water for waterfowl. 2) Use of the property by non-hunters (fisherman, sightseers, wildlife viewers, hikers, etc.) continues to greatly exceed use by hunters. 3) Use of the area during the non-hunting season increased over the same period in 1997, but overall year-round use remains light (estimated to average 5 visitors per day). 4) Average group size remains small, probably less than three individuals per group. 5) Local residents (Agency Lake area) represent the largest visitor group using the property on regular basis.

Regarding recreational facility development, the area received substantial improvements in 1998. The entrance, parking, and staging areas were paved, to reduce complaints from nearby neighbors regarding excessive dust. A new vault type toilet, canoe and small boat launch, and parking area landscaping were installed. A one-half mile fully accessible trail was constructed from the parking area to the main wetland area. A contract was awarded to design and fabricate six interpretive display panels that will orient visitors, interpret wildlife, wetland function and other resources to visitors. The interpretive contract and trail work were partially funded with a wetland restoration grant received through the Klamath Falls Bureau of Reclamation.

These new facilities appear to receive good use and were almost universally praised by visitors contacted by the BLM. The BLM is planning to provide an additional permanent restroom near the Wood River bridge, install the above mentioned interpretive displays, install floating boardwalk levee crossings and complete planning for a wetland trail and environmental education site in 1999. Another contract for design and fabrication of approximately six additional interpretive displays will also be awarded. Some of this work will be funded by grant monies received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the state of Oregon.